



Town of Carlisle

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Office of

PLANNING BOARD

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MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING WITH BOARD OF SELECTMEN

September 9, 2003

Identification and analysis of potential sites for Wireless Communications Facilities [Broadcast Signal Lab and GPR]

Chair Louise Hara called the Planning Board meeting to order at 7:45 p.m. in the Clark Room at Town Hall joining the Board of Selectmen meeting already in session. Planning Board Members Michael Abend, David Freedman, Dan Holzman, and Tom Lane were present. Planning Administrator George Mansfield and Administrative Assistant Anja Stam were also present. Planning Board member Phyllis Zinicola arrived at 8:00 p.m. Timothy Hult (Chair), John Ballantine, Doug Stevenson and Vivian Chaput represented the Board of Selectmen. Town Administrator Madonna McKenzie and BOS Administrative Assistant Margaret McNally were also present.

Mosquito reporter Betsy Fell was present along with Patricia Stimpson of Canterbury Court; Michael and Diane Bleday, Kerry Kissinger and Larry and Karen Barton of Elizabeth Ridge Road and other interested members of the public.

Hara gave an overview of the study explaining that GPR studied the Town to find parcels that meet the current zoning bylaw requirements for siting wireless communication facilities and would be feasible for such facilities. Approximately 70 sites were identified. This list was further reduced to 23 sites once those with access problems, full conservation restrictions or wetland issues were eliminated. An additional 16 sites feasible for wireless facilities were found that would require variances to the 900 foot setback requirement. BSL then took this list and studied the sites for their radio frequency capabilities. Hara directed the Selectmen to page 35 of the study, which identifies the areas in Carlisle receiving little or no wireless coverage. Based on these coverage requirements and the available sites, BSL offered numerous scenarios involving 150-foot towers, monopoles and various locations throughout Town. Four possible solutions are summarized in Table 1 on page 17. Hara noted that the school was recommended as an ideal site to provide maximum coverage in the center of Town with minimal obtrusion. Hara concluded her introduction by asking the Selectmen for direction in establishing goals and a specific plan for wireless facilities in Carlisle.

Ballantine asked if the study's objective is to provide wireless coverage for the entire Town. Abend explained that this is the carrier's ultimate goal, but they are primarily interested in covering the major north-south and east-west routes through Carlisle.

(Zinicola arrived.)

Hult asked if the PB has a preference for fewer large towers or multiple lower towers. Hara said that a mix of different tower types would be required, but the Board generally favors brown monopoles placed in a wooded area.

Chaput asked the PB to provide examples of wireless facilities located at schools. Holzman explained that the Westwood school referenced in the report actually requested proposals for a wireless facility there, and designed the cupola to house the facility. Holzman also noted that the Carlisle School currently has a microwave antenna for police and fire communication located on it. Such radiation is much stronger than that emitted from wireless facilities. Abend also noted that wireless signals are sent out horizontally from the tower, and very little radiation can be detected directly beneath the facility. Freedman explained that a tower on the Conant Land might be more hazardous to the school population than a facility located directly on school property.

Stevenson asked how the Zoning Bylaw might be revised to accommodate the plan. The PB suggested developing an overlay district in preferred locations. This would encourage carriers to locate in these areas, and allow the Town to reject applications outside the preferred sites. Holzman also recommended establishing setback requirements based on tower height. Chaput suggested that such an overlay district on Town-owned land would be ideal. Ballantine asked how the bylaw should be drafted to specify these sites.

Freedman suggested that BSL would be helpful in recommending and reviewing bylaw changes, but noted that before such changes are drafted, the PB requires direction from the BOS on its preferred sites. One issue that must be decided, for example, is whether or not the school should be considered as a preferred site.

The Town Administrator proposed that two members from the BOS and three from the PB form a working group to discuss preferences and choose the best alternatives. She advised that the group's recommendations be completed by early December. Abend suggested that representatives from the school and ConsCom might be helpful on this subcommittee.

Hara requested that the subcommittee provide its recommendation by the end of October noting that several options had already been presented by the consultant, and the committee's task is simply to choose the best option. She explained that in order to prepare possible bylaw changes in time for Spring Town Meeting, the Planning Board must allow time for drafting the bylaw, engineering review and public comment. Mansfield supported Hara's request noting that the carriers are waiting for the Town's response to the study and will apply pressure if there is no action.

Abend, Holzman and Lane volunteered to serve on the subcommittee as Planning Board representatives. The Board of Selectmen agreed to discuss BOS representatives to the subcommittee later in the evening. Hult then opened the floor to questions from the public.

Patricia Stimpson said that after speaking directly with the consultant, she understood that zoning bylaw changes might not be required since Carlisle's Zoning Board of Appeals grants variances more freely than typically allowed by zoning boards.

Michael Bleday asked if one site could cover the town, or if additional sites would be required. Hara explained that depending on the configuration, approximately four to five sites would require wireless facilities in order to provide coverage throughout Carlisle. Bleday also asked if there are any sites identified in the report that do not require variances. Mansfield said ten such sites are listed.

Kerry Kissinger suggested beginning with one tower at the school to see how much actual coverage it provides before permitting additional facilities. She thought this might be adequate to reduce pressure from the carriers. Hara agreed, noting that this strategy was also suggested by BSL. Kissinger also requested additional proof models to support installation of wireless facilities at schools.

Larry Barton noted that although the study recommends four to five sites in order to provide coverage, each of these sites could have multiple facilities located on them. Hara confirmed this noting that several "flagpoles" on a site might be preferable to one large tower.


Diane Bleday asked if a copy of the report is available at the library. Stam agreed to provide a copy to the library, and noted that a copy is currently available for review in the PB office. The report may also be purchased from the Planning Board either as a black and white copy or on a CD for \$10.00.

One member of the public who did not identify herself asked why conservation land had been eliminated from consideration while the school property had not. She felt strongly that conservation properties should be considered over the school location. Hara explained that multiple steps are required to gain access to land under conservation restriction, often requiring action at the State level. This is generally a long process and carriers are unwilling to take their chances with these sites. The PA noted that many conservation parcels are restricted because they have been purchased with State and/or Federal funds. Freedman informed the audience that there are some conservation sites recommended in the report.

Karen Barton asked for a definition of an overlay district and how it would function. Holzman explained that these districts would still have setback requirements, but they would be the only areas in Town where wireless facilities could be sited. Public hearings would still be required. Mansfield explained further that all the bylaws pertaining to the underlying district still apply in the overlay district.

At 9:05 p.m. the Planning Board unanimously adjourned their meeting and left the Clark room, while the Selectmen continued their meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



Anja M. Stam
Administrative Assistant